The Commonweal

August 15, 1947

Lessons of Indonesia

Mr. Churchill at Blenheim

The Negro's Friends

Prompter of Fiction

The Censorship in Eire

VOLUME XLVI **15c** NUMBER 18

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The
COMMONWEAL

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The Lessons of Indonesia

THE DUTCH certainly did not plan it that way, but their week of relatively light warfare against the unruly Indonesian army may turn out to be an extremely useful political demonstration. From now on, in a political sense, the affair in Indonesia can be for the rest of the world what it has already been for the refurbished Dutch army—the perfect field problem. The terrain is far enough removed from contested straits and sensitive frontiers to be considered almost neutral; the opposing sides are distinguishable and the immediate history of the situation is known. And best of all, the problem, according to the inflated standards for international trouble in the twentieth century, is pocket-size. If it can be eliminated or immunized, then so can some of the more gigantic irritations.

The Dutch, if they are at all reflective or sensitive to side-line opinion, must already have learned a few things of lasting value. World reception to the attack by their army (distastefully rigged out in American uniforms and equipment) should by now have convinced them of the responsibility borne by one democratic nation toward all others: an obligation to refrain from any brusque, single-handed line of action, particularly military, which might reflect discredit on democratic nations everywhere. The Dutch lapse in Indonesia is the kind of thoughtless activity on the part of a democratic nation which temporarily relieves Soviet propaganda agencies of the necessity for invention.

But the learning, in this instance, is not all on the side of the Dutch. As citizens of a colonial power of long and impressive standing, they realize, much better than do some of their distant critics, that the cries of "freedom" and "self-determination," when raised in the Far East, do not necessarily ring with the same purity that is usually accorded those words in the pages of a textbook on American history. Even if the investigation of the Indonesian problem which is now being conducted by members of the United Nations Security Council does not terminate in peace and ideal adjustment, it will have been worth a considerable investment of energy and time if the Council's report convinces the more emotional supporters of world-wide freedom and self-determination that aroused nationalism in the Far East usually contains a strong mixture of the bogus and the opportunistic.

As a source of handy reference in dealing with future colonial turmoil and as an aid to understanding the newly-created native governments, it will certainly be worth everyone's while to make note of the ingredients which have gone into the Indonesian native government. But that part of the current demonstration in the Far East will have been wasted if it is not also realized—with no matter how much regret—that in colonial affairs today even a bogus nationalist movement is irresistible. From the wrangle in Indonesia the world can learn just how the white man is to depart—without leaving chaos, jungle fascism, and resentment behind him. In this instance, the United Nations has accepted the job of perfecting the technique of departure.

The clamor in favor of using the Security Council of the United Nations as the proper and most hopeful way to a peaceful settlement in Indonesia has been so strong that anything less than a neat and perfect solution of the Dutch-Indonesian affair is bound to have a disillusioning effect on those who most fervently wish the United Nations well. The position, however, is an unfair one. Members of the Security Council will certainly be able to advise the Dutch on how to quit the Far East in good order and they will be just as able to chart out a democratic way for the Indonesians. But it is extremely doubtful that they will be able to make their advice stick. And that, curiously enough, may be the most valuable side-benefit to develop from the whole Indonesian

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matter. If the United Nations organization, for want of actual force, is unable to leave behind in the Far East a solution of the Indonesian problem that will endure, then it should be obvious to everyone that until the United Nations is abetted by an international police force it will never have more than a rather pleasant, intrusive effect on the differences between wayward nations. The try-out in Indonesia may represent the beginning of a genuine United Nations organization. Or it may be the first step toward no United Nations at all.

Ebbing Resources

EVIDENCE piles up that Americans continue to be as lavish with the natural resources with which this continent was endowed as in pioneer days. It has been no secret that our far western plains have for years been overgrazed and it appears now that a few thousand western cattlemen of the American National Livestock Association and the National Wool Growers Association (of recent tariff fame) are after great tracts of public lands. Just as the California companies who were after tideland oil or the agricultural corporations who sought water rights hitherto reserved for smaller farmers raised the slogan of "states rights," so these broad-brimmed gentlemen of the mountain and other western states have been chanting, "return the public lands to the West." If the slogan has proved none too convincing, the ranchers have in fact accomplished much of their objective, according to Lester Velie in a recent *Collier's*. For the Grazing Service has been under such constant investigation and its budget so sharply cut, that there is now little to prevent the cattle operators from virtually taking over vast public land tracts which they are grazing. Their overgrazing has caused widespread erosion in the Far West, the choking of dams and reservoirs, much of the floods and droughts. It is estimated that fifty years of careful nursing is needed to repair the damage thus far, with another fifty to return these originally grassy areas to their pristine luxuriance. Who is going to block the cattlemen?

Another disturbing sign is a report in *Newsweek* that the West Coast is strapped for fuel. Natural gas consumption has to be confined largely to users in private homes, oil reserves are dwindling to the point that California within four years will have to import "as much as 97,000 barrels of oil daily." Utilization of the local vast water power potential offers real hope for the industrial development for the West Coast, but the pipelines contemplated from West Texas would simply deplete still further our national energy store. The country needs a new agency to dramatize and watch over the cause of natural resource conservation.

Emigrating Puerto Ricans

ONE of the worst plane accidents of recent weeks called public attention to the heavy passenger traffic between the mainland and Puerto Rico—handled by cut-rate airlines. The plane which crashed was taking native-born islanders back for a visit, with the passengers enduring the crowding and other rugged traveling conditions to be expected at such low rates. It appears to be much less difficult to drum up fares in ill-fed Puerto Rico for the flight to the gold-paved United States. In recent months emigration in these planes (and on regular airliners and ocean vessels) has been so brisk that local relief authorities in Harlem and certain other local distress areas are being pushed to the breaking point.

Puerto Ricans do not come under our stubborn immigration laws; they are American citizens. For once here are people we cannot keep out. They come to this country with few skills, unable to speak English and intending to settle in the already dangerously over-crowded city areas peopled by their relatives and friends. Relief rolls in those areas are rising sharply in consequence, while disease, immorality, juvenile delinquency and crime increase because of the packing of several families into single dwelling units.

There does not seem to be any legal means of preventing bucket-seat plane companies from going after business in poverty-stricken Puerto Rico. And people who are desperately off will naturally think in roseate terms of the standard of living, even on relief, in the well-fed United States. Some observers believe that a million of the islanders must emigrate to relieve the economic pressure there. That figure is excessive, but there is much to be said for the organizing of a complete resettlement process contemplating a lesser number and aimed at making these citizens self-sustaining in the United States. That process, if presented persuasively enough to the Puerto Ricans, might prevent their continuing to jam their way into acute city distress areas.

At the same time much remains to be done in the way of enabling the island itself to reach a less colonial economic status. The Puerto Rican Government now seems to have in mind the expansion of fisheries and fish products, mining and processing, water power and such normal procedures as improved transportation and better housing. It is hardly likely that an impoverished community of two million souls can go very far on measures such as these. To accomplish the primary aim of making Puerto Rico more productive a series of practicable new industries should be established. Combining well-prepared and moderate-scale resettlement with an economic program developing new finished products on the island would go a long way toward eliminating what has long been a stain on the escutcheon of the United States.

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Blenheim

THERE are few ways in which Mr. Churchill can be compared to our Mr. Wallace, but his Blenheim speech against "the guilty men whose crazy theories and personal incompetence have brought us down"—the men of the British Labor Government—will do as much harm in America to the British cause as Mr. Wallace did to American prestige in his travels abroad. The only defense for Mr. Wallace was that it could be presumed that each day brought him a thought for the day which he accepted as revelation and felt obliged to proclaim; the sole excuse for Mr. Churchill is that the only way in which he can be rhetorically effective on the subject of economics—one which profoundly bores him—is to speak as a Conservative. The only way a British Conservative can speak today is against the Labor Party.

Mr Churchill, with the Duke of Marlborough backing him and the battle of Blenheim, and his own battles, his own prestige, his victory, so close that when you look at him you see again England standing alone against the Germans, told his compatriots that they could not be saved unless they worked, and told Americans that the British were not working. He said that the British miners were living on "an American dole in the shape of imports produced by the exertions of American working men . . ." He said: "There is no shame in one brave and faithful ally, deeply injured in the common struggle, asking another to help him recover and stand upon his feet." But he said "It is when we are not trying our best . . . that there is humiliation in asking and receiving aid from a mighty and friendly ally." The only way to avoid this humiliation is, of course, "dismissal from office by the British electorate of those who have so obviously failed in their task. . . . Then, indeed, we should set our feet again on the high road which, though it is hard and stony and uphill all the way, leads out of the quagmires in which we are now foundering and sinking."

The British are suffering, victory has been ungrateful to them; now they are told that they must also accept to suffer shame, or revolt against the "socialists" and call Mr. Churchill's party to power. It is not our business in America to decide what they will do, or should do, or must do. Our task is to refuse any share in any process that brings them humiliation. That task is made more difficult by Mr. Churchill's speech.

The speech is interesting to read; it is always interesting to overhear a quarrel which, in this case, is also a debate on one of the most important issues of our times—the question of state ownership and planning—but it will be to our shame if we use this speech to shame the British.

It will be quoted, of course, by all who hate the British; but that does not matter because they will always invent their petty insults and nothing that Britain has done has ever been able to silence them. It will be made use of by those who despise any country that is beyond any sea, any frontier. The isolationists also are incurable, what they say is a constant factor, and the pleasure they will get from Mr. Churchill's words does not concern us. We fear that those words, with their diminished echo of his great past, and surely future eloquence, will affect our policy.

That is where lies the danger of our being shamed. If we tell the British that British credit will "bound" forward, should they elect a Conservative Government, that will be to our shame. If we exact an accounting of effort before we grant the needed modifications to the terms of the loan we made Britain, that action will shame us. It will also endanger our entire policy for the strengthening of Europe.

If we withdraw our trust in Britain, what happens to the Marshall Plan? The Marshall Plan is possible only if the nations of Western Europe are able to believe that we understand their distress, the pressures of circumstance and of politics that weaken them with unceasing fear. If France, if the rest of them, see that we do not trust Britain's integrity—under whatever government—that we do not understand Britain's unavoidable needs, and hesitate to meet them, what hope of our understanding and aid can the French have, the Dutch, the Belgians and the rest? Britain held the seas, the air and our hopes while no other country in Europe could help at all. Every country in Europe knows our debt to Britain and that it is greater than any credit any continental country can claim. Every country in Europe knows that solidarity with Britain is the basis for our strong position in the world today. If they see us make light of that solidarity what trust can they put in the plans we offer whereby they may hope to find strength in solidarity with us? The countries of Europe must be watching us with fascinated anxiety now, as we make up our minds and our policy toward Britain. They must be saying if Britain fails to satisfy America, if Britain is treated by America like a Greece, then it must be that America is a nation in which one may not trust.

There is this constant interdependence between what Europe thinks of us and what we think of Europe. The Marshall Plan depends on mutual trust. Already the plan is being attacked in America and attacks, here, weaken its chances, there, abroad. Here, the people who attack the plan say we have loaned money to Britain, it has done no good, now Britain is asking for more. And there, in England, at Blenheim, Mr. Churchill now says to these people: you are right. There, in England, the British can listen to him and elect his party to power if they choose. But, here, we should listen only to words that say we are determined to help Britain and make possible a peaceful world.

C. G. PAULDING.

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The Negro's Friends

George Streator

THERE HAVE ALWAYS been in the United States many people concerned with the cause of interracial justice, even from the days of slavery when few people dared question the social and economic views of the planter class. Thomas Jefferson was opposed to slavery, at least in the abstract, and others expressed themselves more directly on the question. The majority of the community leaders, the preachers, the planters, the lawyers, the bankers and the Poor Whites who worked as slave bosses and traders, upheld slavery and certainly tolerated its extremes, and kept quiet.

At various periods of our history, some people speak out, tell a little more truth about the system, and indeed, some even write about the notable families who, calling themselves traders, had only one commodity to trade, and that was slaves.

Equally interesting has been the history, however short, and mostly by innuendo, of the slave-owning free people of color, those who served in the Confederate Army, all factors to be taken into consideration in evaluating any of the present-day interracial groups.

There are hundreds of interracial groups in the United States that have come about in some manner, for the purpose of wiping out the last vestiges of slavery. Not all interracial organizations are honorable. Some are plain rackets, just as many charity organizations are not charitable. There are more than 200 organizations in New York City which are working for social causes, enough to confound any student who tries to find out what they are doing.

The organizations generally follow the "lines" of their founders. Some are Communist controlled, lock, stock and barrel. Others are of religious origin, and are Jewish, Protestant, Catholic. There were at one time after World War I, some Moslem organizations for equal rights in Harlem. Even today, a few bedraggled "Black Jews" make their appearance in Harlem, frequently at the West 135th Street Public Library, calling attention to the oneness of all mankind.

Readers of THE COMMONWEAL are familiar with the cause of interracial justice. It has been preached from many angles, and from many sources. The columns of this paper have discussed the Fair Employment Practice Committee, anti-lynching legislation, and about all the stock proposals made by various interracial groups. In general, it can be said that this journal has supported these measures and can continue to support them, for they are all good things generally.

But the questions that is being raised here concerns the health and existence of the several hundred thousand Negroes who are now in process of moving out of the South, and who will add to the large numbers who have moved into Northern, Mid-western and Western cities since the start of the war.

There is no question about the right of Negroes to move out of the South. Some journalists think that they should first get permission of some sort from the Irish, Jews, Poles, Scandinavians and Italians who came here a century ago. But the Negroes, who have been here from the very beginning, ought to have the right to shift to a happier section if the old one is too slow to change.

Our interracial organizations do much lip service to Negroes, but how to feed them, employ them, train them in better use of their time is a hit-or-miss affair. In addition, our interracial leaders stand back silently for fear they will bring criticism on their heads if they take public stands on "hot" questions.

Interracial groups of late have become mainly pressure groups for Federal and State legislation. They are definitely political, and show it with the timing of their criticisms, and the Federal or State agencies they criticize. The truth is, the interracial groups during the Roosevelt régime got into the habit of running to Washington with one eye on the Civil Service requirements, and the other on the Congressmen.

Consequently, the interracial organizations sought to pitch their weight around just as they did in the period of President Grant, and much in the same fashion that Tuskegee Institute did in the administration of Theodore Roosevelt. The damage done in the régime of FDR was evident all along when Negroes were appointed almost solely to interracial adjustment jobs.

If the Republicans dissolve most of these glamorous Jim Crow jobs, it will do the nation a service, for most of the men who hold these spots are able to work straight, non-racial assignments, in this free albeit Jim Crow nation.

But we are getting ahead of the story. The young Negro, usually a veteran, and above the age of thirty, has got into the habit of marching on Washington annually, and if not that, he marches on the National Association for the Ad-

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vancement of Colored People and the National Urban League and calls for a job to justify his membership fee.

The young Negro got a bad start, especially if he was in his 'teen years during the depression, and learning the meaning of the word pressure. Ever since that day, he has been "pressuring," with little to carry his claim except the willingness to take an office job. The interracial organizations are in a large measure responsible for his impotence, for they advised "putting on the heat" without making a long-range plan for a fighting generation.

This means much more than it sounds if we reflect that the majority of the ten percent of educated Negroes go into the teaching, medical, ministerial or social work professions, with far too few in business of any sort. The attempts to spread education into agriculture, of course, run against prejudices left over from slavery, against the plantation, plus the inroads made into agriculture by large corporations. We can add one more: the decline of the cotton crop.

Take another look and we find 10,000,000 Negroes still in small towns and in agriculture of some sort. Last year, the Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., as a political gesture, invited all of them to move into New York. Are our interracial groups talking about rural problems?

Now, the National Urban League is a city-problem organization. Every dollar it can raise this year can be well spent working with migrants to the big cities who have no skills. In addition, there is the problem of educating the city boards of education to their own folly in tolerating poor schools and poor teachers because the heads are afraid to buck the legislatures and local council bodies.

★

But this is not the only urban problem. There is housing. The Catholic forces certainly should work for better housing for Negroes who continue to move into broken-down Catholic parishes with practically no probability that, in this generation, they will enter the Catholic Church in mass. Many individual church leaders in Brooklyn, Gary, Ind., Chicago, and probably wherever a church parish has been "invaded" by Negroes, have been active in everything to fight Negroes except the Ku Klux Klan. Remove the religious barrier and some frightened priests might even start burning crosses.

Above and beyond the issue of subsidized city housing, there is the field of subsistence farms for Negroes. Neither the Urban League nor the NAACP have a Monsignor Ligutti going about leading this fight. Consequently, nobody at either annual convention says much about the family farm, and how to aid it.

The leaders of many interracial organizations fall very easily into the habit of speaking with the voice of authority. This is natural, and a recognizable human trait. But it does not mean that the American Negro to the last man has gone totalitarian. During the Roosevelt administration it got to be the custom that some Negro leaders would say, "I talked this over with Mrs. Roosevelt," as if that was the end of all further discussion. But that is not the way things should be done. The time has not yet come when we will have interracial hierarchies.

At the same time it must be said that some Catholic interracial leaders want the NAACP to "cut the cake" and take them in for a share of the decisions. This is also understandable, but the day has not come when Catholic organizations should use "muscle in" tactics with Negro organizations. The same is true of many young Jewish leftists who, of late, essay to tell Negroes off, too frequently. There is nothing in the cards to says whose tactics are best for Negroes, those the Jews offer, those the Catholics offer, or those the Negro blunders into himself.

It is good for the nation that Catholics have become interested in Negro welfare. It is cheering to find that Catholic Charities of a Western city have hired a Negro girl, long neglected by the Church, for a position of authority, with a staff that is all white.

The fact that the staff is all white is not very important. Actually, it is of no importance at all in the eyes of the Maker, but the human family needs something like this, occasionally. If it moves the Protestant Church to do less talking about its better treatment of the Negro, and more actual 1947 good deeds, well and good.

Summing up the main things that Negroes are fighting for, all of which can be called worthwhile, are things that Catholics should grant readily, if it were in their power to do so. 1. Political rights in the South; 2. The abolition of ghettoes North and South; 3. Equal (not separate and equal) educational opportunities; 4. Abolition of Jim Crow cars, trains, buses and other travel facilities; 5. Jim Crow laws as regards public conveniences, such as hotels, restaurants, parks and theaters; 6. Abolition of ghettoes and all other evidence of class and caste.

There is no likelihood that this is going to be done during the rest of the Truman Administration, nor immediately after, no matter which major party goes into the White House. But it will be done eventually when and if our numerous interracial organizations can cut through the long speeches and work for the education of the public on necessary steps if we are to have interracial justice.

Perhaps right in New York City the two largest Negro organizations could agree on fields of ac-

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tivity. It might be wise for the NAACP to cut loose from its veterans program and its labor program and hand that over to the Urban League. In return, the league could support the NAACP in the school fight it makes in the South, and hand over to the NAACP, and expect action, Civil Rights matters, everywhere.

The national field for any Catholic interracial organization at this stage is the education of the priesthood in interracial matters, through literature and a clear statement of social and economic information. In local matters, the Catholic organization, as in Gary, Ind., can initiate a local campaign and fight it through to victory. The point is that the Catholic organization should not be the hiding place of reactionaries or social malcontents without a program.

As stated above, job training for Negroes is very necessary, especially in the cities. Cities are not the rural marketing place where men sit around waiting to be called to do odd jobs. The Negro men found standing about Lenox Avenue, New York City; South Parkway, Chicago; Central Avenue, Los Angeles, and a dozen other streets in American Negro ghettoes, merely reflect three centuries of standing on a corner or under a tree to await a call for a strong back to pull a tree. This is an industrial day, and people must be taught.

Little can be accomplished in the South right now. And little can be accomplished in New York without an entirely new approach to the race problem. All the things our organizations ask for mean very little unless we see the problem in the light of daily needs.

There is a shortage of household workers. Negro organizations are in a measure guilty of creating the belief that housework is a disgrace.

Interracial organizations talk about skilled workers, but are able to furnish few, if any. Negro workers need to be taught cleanliness and the art of being quiet. Father Divine did a better job of that than anybody else, his other difficulties notwithstanding.

Some of the most cheerless, unsightly places to visit are the quarters occupied by some of our interracial groups in different parts of the country. It is not a question of climate, section or high ideals, but one of care, concern, of having one's feet on the ground. If a social agency that guides Negroes to better jobs is unsightly, just what effect does that have on the individual? Are we trying to give the individual Negro our impression of what a scorched earth looks like, to prepare him for a last stand?

In general, the interracial work going on in this country is a muddy picture. There is so much of it. It overlaps. This article touches mainly attitudes and practices of Negro rights and progress groups. There is much that is left unsaid. But there is certainly a great need of stock-taking by all organizations working for Negroes. There is always the need of a Sanhedrin, too.

Paul Rosenfeld: Prompter of Fiction

ROBERT PENN WARREN

ON A NIGHT in November 1913, between 42nd and 43rd streets in New York, Paul Rosenfeld, then a young man recently out of Yale and waiting for a job to open up on the *Times,* was struck by a sudden thought which changed his life and probably has had a good deal of influence on the lives of some other people. The thought was that he didn't have to get a job if he didn't want one. He realized, "imbecile that I was, that I didn't have to go on working on a newspaper if I didn't want to. I had a small income, and could write if it pleased me. This was a revelation!" This thought changed his life, for as a result he devoted himself for the next 33 years, with peculiar purity of purpose, devotion, and impersonality, to the arts of his time. The product of that long period of effort, of the fusion of "democratic *mystique* and "aesthetic *mystique*" which he once said was the object of his critical and creative writing, has been discussed and evaluated elsewhere. What I have been asked to comment on here, however, is the influence which he could exercise incidentally and informally in his personal contacts. I can do this only by recollecting some of the details of my own acquaintance with him, my share in the spirit of that "small income" which made it possible for him to devote himself to the arts.

I first met Paul Rosenfeld in the late summer or fall of 1927 when I came to New York as a student. Either Allen Tate or Kenneth Burke probably introduced me to him. I do not remember the occasion, but I do remember my first visit to his apartment and his conversation about E. E. Cummings and Sherwood Anderson, two writers whom I greatly admired but whom I was not to meet for many years to come. (In 1945 Rosenfeld introduced me to Cummings.) One anecdote about Anderson sticks in my mind. One night Rosenfeld and Anderson, walking down a street in New York, noticed a policeman ahead of them. Rosenfeld, who had always regarded a policeman at best as a sort of brute and at worst as a sort of enemy, made some remark. "Look how he's walking," Anderson replied, "you can tell his left foot hurts him." The anecdote was a good and right one for Anderson. The other anecdotes about Anderson, and the things he said about Cummings's poetry, have escaped me now,

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but it is easy to recapture some of the echo of the excitement of the occasion and to appreciate what I could not appreciate then, the simplicity and generosity which made Rosenfeld sit up half the night and, without any hint of boredom, answer the dozens of questions which a boy would put to him.

There was another aspect to that first visit which did not seem important at the time but which became more important later. Rosenfeld talked a little bit about modern painting and showed me some pictures. I was then completely ignorant of modern art. A college course in the history of art, a course which stopped somewhere back in the 19th century, had done nothing to remedy that defect. My literary friends in Nashville had had little interest in the subject or at least had failed to communicate it to me. I had seen a few pictures in San Francisco and once or twice had heard the aesthetician Stephen Pepper talk about modern painting, but I had not taken advantage of my acquaintance with Pepper to pursue the topic. It was Rosenfeld who really introduced me to modern painting,, and whose talk about it stirred my first interest. In the year of 1927-28, when I came down from New Haven for week-ends, I saw Rosenfeld now and then, and at his instigation or in his company, saw a few exhibits. The first, I think, was a show by Georgia O'Keeffe. In subsequent years when I saw Rosenfeld, the visit would often involve a trip to a gallery. The last exhibit to which he took me was one of Monet's work, two or three years ago. The really important thing for me, however, was not the mere fact that Rosenfeld introduced me to modern painting. The important thing was that he managed to set it for me in relation to the impulse behind modern literature.

My first acquaintance with Rosenfeld was at the time when he, with Van Wyck Brooks, Lewis Mumford, and Alfred Kreymborg, was editing the *American Caravan.* At that time I had already published poems in the *Fugitive,* the *Double Dealer,* the *New Republic,* and one or two other magazines, but that fact did not diminish my pleasure in Rosenfeld's interest in my writing and in his willingness to take some poetry for the *Caravan.* My most direct literary debt to him, however, did not involve poetry but fiction.

Rosenfeld was responsible not only for publishing my first fiction but for its very existence. I had written a few quite horrible short stories in my early undergraduate days, but I had realized how horrible they were and had given up fiction for life. My acquaintance with Katherine Anne Porter in 1927-28 and the fact that Caroline Gordon was writing stories about a section of the country which was my own stirred some interest in fiction and led me to the quite obvious thought that fiction might be written about what I knew most about. But all of my reading in that period was in poetry and American history.

In the course of some conversation, probably in September of 1929, I told Rosenfeld something about the background of a possible story or novel. He said little about it at the time, but a month or two later he wrote me at Oxford to ask me to do a novelette for *American Caravan* IV. I agreed to try, and so in the winter of 1929-30, between sessions at the Bodleian Library, where I was working on a thesis, I wrote a long story about rural Kentucky life in the early part of the century. I suppose that a certain amount of unconscious homesickness and nostalgia went into the effort. In any case, the story was for those months the central fact of my existence. I finished it in the spring, and mailed it off to Rosenfeld. I felt that I had an enormous stake in the story, and could scarcely wait for his reply. He apparently sensed my anxiety, for he did not write but cabled. He said that he liked the story very much and that it would appear in the *Caravan.* It was published under the title "Prime Leaf."

For better or worse, Rosenfeld had committed me to writing fiction. In the next several years I wrote two novels for which I did not find publishers. With the third novel I returned to the material of the novelette which I had originally written for Rosenfeld. I offered the material to Houghton Mifflin in applying for one of the Literary Fellowships, with Rosenfeld, I think, as one of the sponsors of the project. The book appeared, 10 years after Rosenfeld had made the original suggestion, as "Night Rider."

It was always easy to be grateful to Rosenfeld for tangible benefits, but, upon reflection, it is also easy to be grateful to him for certain intangible benefits. Quite effortlessly and naturally he could create an atmosphere of comfortable and dispassionate candor in which conversation throve. There was, however, a peculiar impersonality about that atmosphere. Rosenfeld was an artist at making a guest develop his own views and ideas, but he himself, though capable of firm opinions, never insisted upon them. Only once did I ever hear him make a violent utterance. At my last meeting with him, at a dinner in his apartment in 1945, I made some remark about Ezra Pound's arrest and imprisonment, and he burst out: "I don't want to talk about it! I can't talk about that man!" (In the case of Ezra Pound the democratic *mystique* and the aesthetic *mystique* did not square.) But ordinarily Rosenfeld was extremely reserved. I knew him well for almost 20 years, but now I realize that in certain respects I did not know him at all. An outlander like myself, coming to or through New York on hurried trips, saw him perhaps once a year, or even more infrequently. But when I did see him there

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was the atmosphere of warmth and candor which his breadth of taste, his generosity of nature, his inquiring bent of mind, and his refusal to impose himself always created. It was an atmosphere which you always left with the sense that your own work would be worth trying to do, and that even if you failed at it the effort itself would have its value and its own rewards.

Paul Rosenfeld died in New York City a year ago this month. Several of the last things he wrote were published in this magazine shortly before his death. Mr. Warren's appreciation is one of a series of similar pieces to be brought out in book form next fall.—THE EDITORS.

Communications

FREUDIANS AND CATHOLICS

Lyons, New Jersey

TO the Editors: Harry McNeill has done a fine job in "Freudians and Catholics" (THE COMMONWEAL, July 25). It will be a source of encouragement to Catholics working in the field of psychiatry and, I hope, will give new insight to analytically-oriented psychiatrists who have rejected or who have not fully understood the Catholic point of view.

Society has much to gain from a rapprochement of psychoanalysis and Catholic teaching. To this end Catholics must be willing to take as well as give, and they have much to give.

EMILY R. SCANLAN,
Chief Social Worker, Veterans Administration.

LIBERALISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: Mr. Roepke's article, "Liberalism and Christianity" (July 18), is at once so misleading and so obviously sincere that it calls for an answer which will be at once very pointed and very courteous. The following observations are offered, therefore, with the hope that they will at least partially fulfil both the one requirement and the other.

The underlying fallacy in Roepke's interpretation of *Quadragesimo Anno* is the familiar fallacy of begging the question. By his own admission, what he seems to be interpreting is not so much the text (and the context) of the encyclical itself as his own particular version of what Pope Pius XI, as a wise and learned teacher, simply must have intended to say. ". . . only the restoration of a true competitive order," Roepke says, "promises a cure. To attribute falsely a different opinion to the author of the encyclical would be to offend his sagacity."

Instead of debating the question in the abstract, may I suggest that we consult the actual text of *Quadragesimo Anno* together with a parallel and equally pertinent reference from a later encyclical of the same Pope, *Divini Redemptoris?* It is to be regretted that Roepke himself fails to refer verbatim to either of these passages, for of all quotations from recent Papal documents they are assuredly the most directly pertinent to the essence of his article.

"Attention must be given also to another matter that is closely connected with the foregoing. Just as the unity of human society cannot be founded on an opposition of classes so also the right ordering of *economic* life cannot be left to a free competition of forces. For from this source, as from a poisoned spring, have originated and spread all the errors of individualist economic teaching. Destroying through forgetfulness or ignorance the social and moral character of *economic* life, it held that economic life must be considered and treated as altogether free from and independent of public authority, because in the market, i.e., in the free struggle of competitors, it would have a principle of self-direction which governs it much more perfectly than would the intervention of any created intellect. But free competition, while justified and certainly useful provided it is kept within certain limits, *clearly cannot direct economic life*—a truth which the outcome of the application in practice of the tenets of this evil individualistic spirit has more than sufficiently demonstrated. Therefore, it is most necessary that *economic* life be again subjected to and governed by a true and effective directing principle. This function is one that the *economic* dictatorship which has recently displaced free competition can still less perform, since it is a headstrong power and a violent energy that, to benefit people, needs to be strongly curbed and wisely ruled. But it cannot curb and rule itself. Loftier and nobler principles—social justice and social charity—must, therefore, be sought whereby this dictatorship may be governed firmly and fully. Hence, the institutions themselves of peoples, and particularly those of all social life, ought to be penetrated with this justice, and it is most necessary that it be truly effective, that is, establish a juridical and social order, an order which public authority ought to be ever ready effectively to protect and defend. It will be able to do this the more easily as it rids itself of those burdens, which, as we have stated above, are not properly its own.

"It happens all too frequently, however, under the salary system, that individual employers are helpless to ensure justice unless, with a view to its practice, they organize institutions the object of which is *to prevent competition incompatible with fair treatment for the workers.* Where this is true, it is the duty of contractors and employers to support and promote such necessary organizations as normal instruments enabling them to fulfil their obligations of justice. But the laborers too must be mindful of their duty to love and deal fairly with their employers, and persuade themselves that there is no better means of safeguarding their own interests.

"If, therefore, We consider the whole structure of *economic* life, as We have already pointed out in Our Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno,* the reign of mutual collaboration between justice and charity in social-economic relations can only be achieved by a body of professional and interprofessional organizations, built on solidly Christian foundations, working together to effect, under forms adapted to different places and circumstances, what has been called the Corporation."

(Italics added: I have italicized the word "economic" several times by way of replying to Roepke's unfounded contention that the Pope intended the Industries and Professions system to be limited "to tasks of social policy.")

Whether or not these two passages are to be interpreted as being "directed against the market economy" depends, I suppose, on what is meant by the market economy. Be that as it may, certainly they must be interpreted, *pace* Mr. Roepke, as an explicit rejection of the

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theory that competition is to be the mainspring, or, as Pius XI refers to it, the "directing principle" of economic life. As I see it, this is the hub of the controversy. Mr. Roepke, a faithful if eminently humane descendant of the liberal school of economics, maintains that there cannot possibly be a *tertium quid* as between competition and collectivism. Pius XI, on the contrary,—and this is the heart of the encyclical—says precisely the opposite. Not only does he deny that competition can be the "directing principle" of economic life, but he takes the trouble to describe, at least in skeleton form, the system of organized economic cooperation (as opposed to competition) which he envisions as a substitute for competition on the one hand and collectivism on the other.

As an economist, Roepke may conceivably have misgivings about the workability of the Industries and Professions system (a synonym for what he refers to as the "corporate economy"). Similarly he may question the advisability of establishing such a system in its fulness at the present time. That's one thing. But to say that Pius XI *didn't advocate the Industries and Professions* system as a substitute for the rule of competition in economic life, or to conclude that the Industries and Professions system is synonymous with collectivism, or to say that the Industries and Professions system was intended to be limited "to tasks of social policy" (as opposed presumably to tasks of economic policy) is to misinterpret both the letter and the spirit of *Quadragesimo Anno* and of subsequent statements from the Holy See.

The foregoing observations are intended only as a partial or interim reply to Mr. Roepke's provocative article. Others will probably want to submit a more detailed and more exhaustive commentary.

Suffice it to say in conclusion that Roepke's brand of neo-liberalism (for the sincerity and humaneness of which one can have only the highest admiration) seems to have little to offer towards the solution of the tragic economic problems of those countries in Europe for which apparently his article was originally intended. As a substitute for collectivism in Europe Roepke's neo-liberalism, with its nostalgic emphasis on the sanctity of competition as the "directing principle" of economic life, will be even less effective than the Sherman Act has been in preventing the concentration of economic power in the United States. If Europe is obliged to choose as between neo-liberalism on the one hand and collectivism on the other—with no other alternative—she will probably drift into collectivism, if only by default. Perhaps it is for this very reason that the Holy See in some of its recent warnings against excessive nationalization on the Continent has seen fit to reemphasize the importance of the Industries and Professions system.

The Reverend GEORGE G. HIGGINS.

IS ENGLAND DYING?

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: I do not think you should let J. L. Benvenisti's comments on the British coal situation pass without a rejoinder. I make no objection to the rest of the article. My figures as to the number employed in

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commercialized gambling came from the Pool Operators Association, which I consider a reliable source. But, your readers should not be misled about the coal situation.

In a matter as important to the United States as the national vitality of England one should discriminate between minor and major facts. The major facts about British coal are that total coal got above ground has fallen far below British requirements, not to mention the traditional export requirements, and that so far production has not improved because of nationalization or the recruitment campaign. There are endless explanations of the first major fact, but the fact itself stands; and it is currently costing the United States somewhere in the neighborhood of $300,000,000 a year.

The fact that British coal production has failed to increase materially after nationalization and the recruitment campaign is certainly significant in view of the great urgency of increased coal production. Whether it is a temporary and transitional fact one cannot now conclude. I was told that there is a good deal of question whether there are underground faces in sufficient number to let added manpower be effective before considerable development work has been completed, and this may account for the absence of any tonnage increase proportional to the new recruits. Perhaps after further lapse of time production will begin to rise.

To my mind this recruitment campaign in the mines and the character of its attendant publicity, is an appalling thing. Coal mining is held out to recruits as a worthy occupation and career, and from what Mr. Benvenisti says some 9,000 juveniles have been brought into the mines with these pleas. Yet, British mining under present muscle methods and escalated wages makes uneconomically expensive coal, and the solution remains mechanization if economic coal is to be produced. Economic coal must be produced, because Britain's export trade cannot carry the burden of $12.00 a ton coal whether the uneconomic price shows up in the price of export goods or in the form of a tax to support a coal subsidy. If we assume that mechanization will come, then the British coal mining industry cannot employ anything like 750,000 men, and a great many of the people now being cajoled into mining are going to find themselves victims of technological change. I want to make the point that the British Labor government is not stating these facts in its recruitment campaign.

If this disposition to gloze over fundamental facts were something new in British coal mining—and in other segments of British industry, too—there would be no particular reason for anxiety. The truth is that this behavior has been habitual in England for a good many years, and that the British Labor Party's apologists have not broken the pattern. Mr. Benvenisti's paragraphs about coal are excellent examples. The statement that "The margin of profit and the degree of security offered were insufficient to have attracted the necessary capital on a commercial basis in any country in the world" is simply not true. But it is also meaningless, because England, and not any country in the world, is what's involved. His intimation that mining machinery was not available is also untrue. Russia placed orders for $82,000,000 worth of mining machinery in the United States last year. The Office of International Trade in the Department of Commerce knows the story of British efforts to get American mining machinery, and that story reflects no credit on the British.

I think the time has come when the United States must bring home to England that, however much the English may feel America owes thems something, they are going to have to do something themselves if they expect this debt to be paid.

We have about 500 ships exporting American coal which we cannot deliver to European points once served by British export coal at anything like economic prices. Next winter, unless I miss my guess, we are going to export coal to the British Isles. We are making these doubly uneconomic exports in return for a British export of explanations, excuses, and increasingly venomous yapping from the British Isles. I do not think a condition of this sort can continue much longer. I think that England, to maintain her own self-respect, has got to mine coal.

NAT S. FINNEY.

The Screen

Words and Music

MOVIEGOERS expecting the new Bing Crosby-Barry Fitzgerald opus to be another "Going My Way" are likely to be disappointed; but they will still find *"Welcome Stranger"* a much better than average comedy. Playing doctors this time instead of priests, the boys have to work harder to surprise and charm their audience and they make practically no attempt to bring tears to your eyes. However, in their informal patter Bing and Barry are as delightful as ever; and the main situation, in which the old doctor, trying to get away on a vacation, resents the younger man who was sent to take his place, offers many opportunities for sarcasm and humor—especially since Barry insists that Bing is not a doctor but a singing hobo. Furthermore, this mundane plot allows Bing to get involved in romance. In this small Maine town lives the state's prettiest schoolmarm (Joan Caulfield), and as soon as the crotchety old doc gets adjusted to the casual newcomer, he starts playing cupid like mad. Elliott Nugent has directed Arthur Sheekman's script in a quiet sort of way; he can't cover up the story's thinness but he does let his amiable cast win us with their pleasant clowning, and both Barry and Bing are masters at putting over cracks that seem extemporaneous. Several of the songs sung by Crosby, with an occasional assist from the other members of the cast, have already hit the hit parade; and one of them, "Make Mine Country Style," should add to the rising popularity of square dances.

"Northwest Outpost" is for those who prefer a more conventional operetta kind of musical comedy. It has a pleasing but not too distinguished score by Rudolf Friml which is well sung by Nelson Eddy, Ilona Massey and others, including the American G.I. Chorus. The plot, however, is very old school and chock full of cliché situa-

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tions that cannot be taken seriously. During Van Buren's administration, Russia maintained a fort in California that also served as a penal colony. Even though the script says, "Convicts are better off here than in Siberia," beautiful Natalie (Massey) leaves her home country to help her husband (Joseph Schildkraut) escape from the chain gang. In no time she falls in love with the handsome American captain (Eddy) who frankly admits that he enjoys his own singing. You probably will enjoy it too, for Nelson does right well by Friml and the hymns he sings from the Russian Easter service; but you're likely to get a little bored as the story goes on and on while Natalie battles with her conscience in trying to decide how much she can use the American in freeing her husband. The you're-beautiful-and-he's-a-man technique gets yanked into the argument. Real comedy relief is so well handled by Elsa Lanchester and Hugo Haas that you forget how necessary and time-worn this kind of comedy relief is.

Producer George Jessell got the idea that a musical film based on incidents in the early life of songwriter and entertainer Joe Howard would be a wow. I don't think that the finished product, appropriately called *"I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now,"* merits enthusiastic exclamations. Several of Howard's songs are still very singable, and the cast puts them over nicely—all except the title number which is done so elaborately and in such bad taste that it loses much of its own charm. The plot on the whole is pretty static although Mark Stevens manages to make Howard as real a person as any of the subjects in these synthetic musical biographies. He is surrounded by a bevy of girls including June Haver, Martha Stewart and Lenore Aubert. For some reason he chooses Miss Haver—perhaps because her rôle makes her tell one of the nastiest lies that a heroine ever had to resort to in a musical comedy. Mr. Jessell has stated several times recently that American movies are better entertainment than foreign ones. His own production, although in full technicolor, does not prove the point.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The Censorship in Eire

MARGARET BARRINGTON

IT IS difficult to approach the subject of our censorship of books in Eire in an absolutely unbiased spirit. Bigotry begets bigotry, even in a good cause. Whenever the subject comes up, tempers run high and manners go by the board. This lack of manners, understandable in the minority party, is even more apparent in the majority which supports censorship. You have only to read the Dail debates on the subject to be deeply shocked at the baseness of abuse and innuendo, coming from men and women unfailingly courteous in the ordinary walks of life.

I myself am biased; there's no getting away from it. Not only do I live by the profession of letters but I regard it as an impertinence that a group of five "addlepated old men," as Sean O'Faolain called the Board of Censors, should confine my reading matter to the level of what is fit for the adolescent girl. I regard these men as not only addlepated but capable of seeing indecency where there is none. The Chairman of the Board, Professor Magennis, once described the effect on him of seeing the drawings in the medical books for students displayed in a bookshop. I do not know if I am more shocked at the Professor's sensitivity or amazed that a man of his age should react in so robust, so adolescent, a manner. That is the truth of the matter. These men who are set to judge our reading, are still emotionally adolescent. It is not an uncommon complaint in any country. Only here we do not recognize it as a failing.

The idea of a censorship of publications came up as soon as we had a government of our own. The Cosgrave party resisted the pressure which was brought to bear on it, not only by the Church but even more strongly by the religious lay bodies, such as The Catholic Truth Society. Though it is quite true that many clergymen and bishops, of both the Catholic and Protestant Churches, were in favor of a censorship, the real impetus came from laymen. This is a national, not a religious censorship.

At first the threatened reading public, which is relatively small, took the matter lightly. A few intellectuals tried to band together to agitate against it, mostly young writers and painters. But nothing came of it but a few merry jests and rude verses of no great merit. They simply did not realize what was coming.

But it was not until Mr. De Valera's party (Fianna Fail) came to power that matters took a serious turn. Those who voted for Fianna Fail, under the impression that they were voting for a more revolutionary form of government, soon saw their mistake. By 1929, the Board of Censorship was established and working. And the Irish writers who had laughed found themselves among its first victims. There is now not a single Irish writer of repute, Catholic as well as non-Catholic, and scarcely a well-known foreign writer whose work has not been banned. One is forced to believe when one finds a decent book to read, that it is because the Board of Censors has not got round to it yet.

The Board consists of five members, chosen by the Government. Three are Catholics, two Protestants, only one is a priest. Senator Professor Magennis is chairman. They are supposed to read the books and advise the Minister of Justice who does the banning. If a majority of three decides that a book is to be banned and the other two object, setting out their objections in writing to the Minister, he cannot ban the book. But so far as the public is aware this has not happened. The only set-

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back the Censorship Board has suffered was when Mr. Lynn Doyle, like the proverbial worm, turned and resigned. But that set-back was only momentary. Sublime, self-confident, above criticism, the Board goes its way, banning an average of three books a week.

It may seem impossible that three men, who receive no salary for their work and must earn their livings otherwise, could possibly find time to read all those books, not only the ones banned, but the unbanned. It is generally accepted that they rely on the fervid enthusiasts for the bulk of their information, i.e., the common informer. This purity fifth column scours the libraries and book-shops in search of material to turn in, neatly marked and docketed. Little escapes them. Every small town has its willing band of helpers. The lives of most librarians and booksellers cannot be easy. They are obliged, in self-defense, to do the Censors' work for them. Otherwise they would incur losses through confiscation of stock. There is virtually no black market in banned books, because the reading public is not large enough, nor rich enough, to make it worth the risk. In a country where—to quote Senator Fitzgerald—over twenty-five million dollars is spent annually teaching the people to read and write without giving them any real education, the majority of the people want only such reading matter as requires the least mental effort. Consequently, there is no real opposition to the censorship. The fight goes on between ten percent of bigots backed by eighty-nine percent of indifferent yes-men and a handful of vociferous intellectuals.

For by no means all the intellectuals fight on the side of liberty. There are many second-rate men who believe that the banning of the books of better-known writers leaves the market open to them without competition. But a few writers, such as Sean O'Faolain, Peadar O'Donnell, Theresa Deevy and some others, have consistently kept up the fight, partly through the columns of *The Irish Times,* the only daily paper open to them and the only daily paper which publishes the list of banned books, and *The Bell,* a monthly magazine run by O'Faolain and O'Donnell. And in the Senate, the fight has been carried on by Senator Sir John Keane.

This continued buzzing of the wasps, who though small in number, have pens and tongues and wits to aid them, has led to one change. A Board of Appeal has been set up to which writer or publisher can appeal in the case of a banned book. So far this has happened only once, in the case of Mr. Frank O'Connor's translation of "The Midnight Court." But since the judges of the Court of Appeal are hand-picked by the same powers which set up the Board of Censors, there is little sense and much expense in appealing to them. In the case of "The Midnight Court," where it was contended by the publisher that the poem was one of the finest in the Gaelic language; that it could be bought and read any day of the week in that language; that it had been previously translated by Arland Ussher and that translation uncensored; that the work was scholarly and exact; it transpired during an acrimonious correspondence in the columns of *The Irish Times* that the judges had not even read the work, relying on the reports of those they called "experts." The very fact that they must know Gaelic to hold their positions, and yet had not read this classic, was in itself a shocking admission. They even asserted, without reading it, or having read the original, that certain passages must be interpolations or bad translations.

On what grounds can a book be banned? Section 6 of the *Censorship of Publications Act,* 1929, lays it down that:

> Whenever a complaint is duly made under this act to the Minister to the effect that a book or a particular edition of a book is indecent or obscene or advocates the unnatural prevention of conception or the procurement of abortion by miscarriage or the use of any method, treatment or appliance for the purpose of such procurement, the Minister may refer such complaint to the Board.

The word *indecent* is the catch. Very reluctantly, under pressure from Sir John Keane, the Government conceded this definition of "indecent":

> The word "indecent" shall be construed as including anything *suggestive of,* or inciting to sexual immorality or unnatural vice or *likely in any other similar way to corrupt or deprave.*

The italics are mine. It is because these words can be used to cover almost anything that so many works, which seem utterly harmless to an educated reader, or for that matter, to an ignorant one, are banned. One outraged gentleman wrote to *The Cork Examiner,* in a tone of bitter levity, to say that he thought his son ought not to be taught to read and write, otherwise he might get hold of a dictionary and learn indecent words he had no right to know. The idea is not so preposterous. Certainly one wonders why Professor Magennis has not got round to having a bowdlerized edition of the dictionary published.

From time to time the controversy dies down, only to spring up again with renewed bitterness. The last big fight was staged during the war. On the 18th of November, 1942, Sir John Keane tabled a motion in the Senate that the Censorship Act had ceased to retain public confidence. With the good manners which have always characterized this gentleman of the old school, Sir John had previously informed the Minister of Justice of the names of the three books he intended to bring into question. They were: "The Tailor and Anstey," by Eric Cross; "The Land of Spices," by Kate O'Brien; and "The Laws of Life," by Halliday Sutherland; possibly so that the Minister might go to the trouble of reading them, a vain hope. There followed one of the most unpleasant debates I have ever read, enlivened here and there with unconscious humor.

After Sir John Keane had stated his case, the Minister, Mr. Boland, modestly replied, saying that he was not a literary man, and acted on the advice of the Board of Censors. He passed the debate on to Professor Magennis and his satellites, who moved into the attack, no holds barred, a fine old-fashioned free-for-all. Not only were Sir John's disinterested motives attacked, but all authors who were banned were stigmatized as smut-hounds, and panderers to man's lowest instincts.

Senator Goulding moved in with a description of the pure Irish fireside, so misrepresented in "The Tailor and Anstey." This somewhat idealized picture makes one wonder if Senator Goulding could ever have sat at one, or emptied a pint in a local snug. Senator Goulding went on to demand a doubled censorship. He asked the Senate to look at the state of England where juvenile crime was on the increase due to unfettered reading. Let Mr. Goulding thought the criminal classes were conus save our young people from a like fate. Evidently

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firmed readers, and that all the spivs, pimps and cat-burglars of Soho were anxiously waiting for the publication of Sylvia Townsend Warner's book on White's tortoise. Or that all readers were incipient if not actual criminals. "A single passage in a book may degrade and corrupt," he declared. "A single passage or two or three passages make a book liable to censorship." He accused Irish writers of so far forgetting themselves and the pure Irish hearths from which they sprang, as to give the rest of the world the impression that we were not only all drunkards, but immoral into the bargain. He ended by thanking God fervently that we were not as the English.

Then, after Senator Johnston, in a mild and cultured speech, urged in support of the motion, that many works of literary value, both ancient and modern, were by these standards indecent, Senator Kehoe raised his voice:

"This affects our national reputation, I am told. I do not know. Does it, I wonder? The fact of having fathered George Moore and others of his ilk—I do not know if that added one jot to our national reputation. Our reputation is built on other things than on literature which is indecent in its tendency. . . ." From this he passed on to an attack on those Irish writers who "purvey their wares for gold." He demanded a sterner censorship. "We hear about authors of repute. Authors of repute from what point of view? From the point of view of world standards, which, mark you, are not the standards of Ireland. . . ." He ended with a warning: "But I will quote the Bible again for Sir John Keane: 'You cannot touch pitch and not be defiled by it.' "

Senator Fitzgerald raised the tone of the debate in a speech which brought comfort to neither party. He disagreed with Sir John Keane. He saw no evidence of any dislike of the censorship among the people. They were too ignorant and badly educated to trouble their heads one way or another. As a people we were without any literary standards. We had no critics worthy of the name. He made a plea for books of literary merit; especially for the works of Graham Greene. He ended . . . "I hate to hear people talking as though anything not suitable for a girl of 14 or for a typist going on the bus to the office must necessarily be condemned and excluded."

There followed another speech from the Minister. Mr. Boland seemed to have forgotten his earlier modesty. He denied any literary merit whatever to books which had been banned. They were "Filth, pure filth," he asserted. He went so far as to say that in his opinion writers inserted filth to get banned and in this way get cheap advertisement in England and Northern Ireland.

It was now that Senator Mrs. Concannon advanced to the attack. Mrs. Concannon is herself a writer, chiefly of books of a religious nature. She began by saying that if Dante (to whose work Senator Fitzgerald had referred) could have thought of a worse punishment for his enemies than the torments of hell then he would have made them read "The Tailor and Anstey." (I myself can think of little worse than a wet day in an Irish seaside hotel with nothing to read except Mrs. Concannon's lives of the Irish female saints.) Mrs. Concannon then went on to paint a moving picture of Professor Magennis, a "man of outstanding ability" who might well have chosen to sit in his study and write philosophical masterpieces. Instead he offered up his great intellect and pure mind to the constant contamination of filthy and indecent literature in order to serve his country and save its inhabitants from pollution. And all this without monetary reward or compensation of any kind. She called for a stricter censorship.

Heralded by this outburst of praise, Senator Professor Magennis, the martyr to the cause of purity, stepped forward. He talked and talked. His speech was full of innuendoes, hints at underhand conspiracies, red herrings by the dozen and half-dozen. He attacked Sir John Keane who was there, and many who were not. All his enemies, or those he fancied were his enemies, were dragged in by reference or name. From *The Irish Times* and the Academy of Letters, to Theresa Deevy, Sean O'Faolain, Frank O'Connor and Deputy Dillon. Finally he turned on Sir John Keane and accused him of falling asleep.

"No, no," said Sir John. "It is a modified form of coma."

The result of the debate was a foregone conclusion. The motion was defeated as all knew it would be. The few gallant fighters realized once again that there was no hope of even a modification of the censorship so long as Mr. De Valera's government remained in power, or even afterwards. The only hope now lies in the fact that so many books will be banned that it will become impossible to keep track of them. As it is, it is the name of the author which remains in the bookseller's mind. I have bought books openly and innocently exposed for sale which were on the banned list.

But it is not only the official censorship the reader is up against. Pressure is often brought to bear on booksellers to suppress certain books. Librarians in public libraries are forced by their committees to remove certain books from the shelves and deny them, even to students. These include Hobbes's "Leviathan," Sigrid Undset's "Kristin Lavransdatter," Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina," and other such. I made a list of the unbanned books of the best known Irish writers. It was pathetically small. Then, as an interested stranger, I made the rounds of the Dublin bookshops. Not one was in stock, and only one shop would place an order for me. Not that booksellers cooperate willingly in this form of tyranny. It gives them additional work. But if they do not, they lose large orders from the religious bodies, and most of the educational establishments in the country are run by the religious orders.

The reasons for this puritanical censorship are many and involved. It is caused partly by the ignorance of the bulk of the people and those who represent them, and by our low standard of education. We still think that swotting up textbooks for an examination is education. At present there is no hope of this standard being raised. In other countries of Western Europe, there has been for centuries an educated middle class, which has not existed here. Until the turn of the century we had in Southern Ireland only a peasantry and a landlord class. It takes time and security to build up culture and an appreciation of the arts. The new middle class is too uncertain, too anxious to hold a hard-won power to think of the finer things of life. And a censorship can be used to prevent the infiltration of ideas which might disturb their peace. But there is something else, which springs from the very heart of the people, from that dark undercurrent of superstition which lies heavily on our land. It is the fear of the written word.

If you listen to ordinary people talking in Ireland, you

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will find their conversation no more inhibited than anywhere else. It is often free and racey. It is wonderfully alive, for the Irish still use language as a living thing. They do not mind very much what they say, for the spoken word vanishes. The written word remains. And it is just this quality of permanence which makes them timorous. The written word is magic.

The effects of the censorship are being felt in more ways than one. The most serious is the effect on the younger generation, which has now just reached maturity. They have been cut off not only from their own writers but from the fine modern literature which has been written in other countries. There has lately been a series of broadcasts on the State of Irish Letters and it was noticeable that not only were all the speakers, but the writers they discussed, men and women of the older generation, who had made their reputations before the days of the censorship. The youngest of the speakers was Dennis Johnston and he is over forty. The well is drying up. To quote Pascal: "We think we are shutting in the light; what we are really shutting in is the dark."

It is impossible to give a list of the books which have been banned. There are too many. But here is a list of a few of the authors. Irish authors: G. B. Shaw, George Moore, Frank O'Connor, Liam O'Flaherty, Sean O'Faolain, Austin Clarke, Francis Stuart, Norah Hoult, Sean O'Casey, Samuel Beckett, Kate O'Brien, Con O'Leary and others. English and American authors: Graham Greene, Henry Greene, Christopher Isherwood, Ralph Bates, the Powys Brothers, Frederic Prokosch, Michael Sadlier, Storm Jameson, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Aldous Huxley, Eric Linklater, H. E. Bates, Gerald Bullett, V. S. Prichett, James Laver, Thomas Wolfe, William Faulkner, Kay Boyle, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, Maurice Hindus, Martha Gellhorn, Joseph Hergesheimer and others. European writers: Ignazio Silone, Montherlant, Kastner, De Castro, Celine, Remarque, Zweig, Leon Blum, Jules Romains, Robert Neumann, Alfred Neumann, Anatole France, Sholem Asch, Boccaccio, Max Brod, Gina Kaus, Leonhard Frank, Andre Malraux, Ramon Sender, Unamuno, Ibanez, Knut Hamsen, Mikhail Sholokhov and others.

Two Citizens of the Nineteenth Century

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

ONE OF HISTORY'S most engaging "ifs" is that which assumes that the American Civil War was avoidable and avoided. On the assumption that our country had been spared this major blood-letting with its attendant physical and moral destruction, we can conjure up a present condition minus many of its most distressing elements; Southerners, we feel, would be far less Southern and Northerners equivalently less Northern; the problem of division between races in the United States less touchy; our political history a trifle less blemished. Yet all such supposition is, like all "if only" meditation, scrimshaw work. The Civil War was fought; its casualties were suffered; and had it not produced its peculiar bag of troubles, who knows what others might have befallen us? But the strange thing is that, far from being convinced that war was inevitable, so many Northerners before 1861 felt it impossible—and among these, Northerners as much as anyone responsible for provoking it.

The last few weeks have produced excellent studies of two prime specimens of this breed, John Bigelow and Horace Greeley, both operating in New York City, both wielding great influence, both operating free-soil newspers and both men of high distinction.* The study of Greeley is focused and concentrated on the brief span of years when he exercised his greatest power, roughly the decade of the fifties, when the forces which were to erupt in war were patterning themselves into clarity. Greeley had been born (1811) in New Hampshire and had received a reasonable amount of education—largely self-education. He had been apprenticed to a small newspaper in Vermont which went broke and had come to New York to seek his fortune. By 1841 he had founded the *Tribune* and his ship was launched. As the years went by he gradually saw his task to consist in welding together the various elements opposing the all-powerful Democratic Party into a reasonably united front which would eventually obtain power and effectively stop the expansion of slavery and the slave power.

Mr. Isely's account of how Greeley contributed to doing this is admirably composed and highly illuminating. Though Greeley could and did bluster and blister with his pen—to the extent of getting handsomely beaten up by a member of Congress—he really viewed himself as a great master of proper compromise and intelligent strategy. He was never particularly straightforward in his approach. And when we remember the diverse views of the men who went to make up the Republican Party—old Whigs, with an existing if damaged machine; Know-Nothings, chiefly inspired by prejudice against immigrants and Catholics; Jacksonian Democrats, still clinging to their free trade and anti-centralist convictions; abolitionists and reformers—we realize that only a catalyst like Greeley could cement their union. The jacket of Mr. Isely's book reproduces a contemporary cartoon showing a band of varied maniacs with Greeley in the van carrying Lincoln on a rail into a mad house in which, presumably, they all belonged, and there is more truth than political venom in the picture. The trouble is that Greeley seemed to believe such a house of cards could serve a useful purpose—other than the sole purpose on which all were united, a free soil policy. Had he realized that the success of this polyglot movement would provoke war, he would perhaps not have labored so hard to hold it together. But there he was blind, firmly believing that the common sense of the South would repudiate the slave-holding leadership if that leadership went too far. Greeley was tragically wrong, and his having been wrong

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*Forgotten First Citizen—John Bigelow. Margaret Clapp. Little. $4.00.

Horace Greeley and the Republican Party. Jeter Allen Isely. Princeton. $4.50.

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ruined him. As Mr. Isely put it, "Such was the bitter harvest of his anti-slavery crusade. The party for which he was so largely responsible had become the intrenched party of the north, determined on vengeance. The wages of battle were hatred, and Greeley saw his hopes of a harmonious society within the nation crumble about his feet. Much of his career had been spent in vain."

John Bigelow, who lived for six years in uneasy alliance with Greeley politically, rather more cruelly summed the man up when he ran for the presidency in 1872 against the very party he had helped weld together: "Greeley is an interesting curiosity which everyone likes to see and to show and in whom we all feel a certain kind of national pride, but I do not think that anyone can seriously believe in his fitness for any administrative position whatever. If they do, they know as little of him as he knows of himself." Bigelow as guiding spirit of William Cullen Bryant's *Post* and essentially a Jacksonian Democrat had also fought the free soil fight, perhaps even with greater clarity and less disingenuousness than Greeley. He supported Fremont early (1854) and was a Seward man in 1860, though he accepted Lincoln and later learned to admire him. He also was blind to the likelihood of civil war, fearing not secession but a Negro uprising. Wise old Samuel Tilden once solemnly told him: "I would not have the responsibility of William Cullen Bryant and John Bigelow for all the wealth in the sub-treasury. If you have your way, civil war will divide this country, and you will see blood running like water in the streets of this city [New York]." Bigelow, then, made much the same mistakes as Horace Greeley, but they did not wreck his career—far from it. Why?

Miss Clapp's book fairly supplies an answer. Bigelow knew the meaning of political give-and-take, of compromise and adjustment. He knew perfectly well that only thus could men act in concert. Yet he did not wholly deceive himself. He constantly remembered and was fearful of the fact that Republican strength lay in union *against* slavery extension rather than in union *for* anything. Since he was a low-tariff, anti-centralist Jeffersonian by conviction, he was bound to be especially critical of "internal improvement" thinking—the then equivalent in government economic thinking of our own "federal aid" advocates. Being unshakably honest, he was utterly disgusted at the mess under Grant and supported Tilden—practically managed his campaign—in the latter's fight for the presidency. In brief, there was a certain temperateness in John Bigelow which saved him from Greeley's downfall.

Bigelow came of Connecticut parents who had settled in the Hudson Valley about forty miles below Albany. He was born in 1817 and—incredibly enough—died in 1911 in full enjoyment of his faculties. His formal education was far more thorough than Greely's, which may account for his greater steadiness; the self-taught often come a-cropper over lack of the very quality which formal training must above all supply, self-criticism and moderation. For a time he attended Washington (now Trinity) College, Hartford, and finished at Union in Schenectady. He then studied law in law offices, finally being admitted to the bar. But writing and journalism were his true loves. When an opportunity offered to become part owner of the *Post*, he seized it, although it promised little financially, and it is indicative of his character that he obtained the necessary cash by a loan from a political opponent, Charles O'Conor. In a brief decade he not only enhanced the *Post's* prestige, but he made it into a highly profitable enterprise—which it had not been—and when he retired to enter the service of the country, he retired with a fortune sufficient to make him independent throughout the many useful years ahead of him.

Miss Clapp calls Bigelow "first citizen," and the tag is excellent. The number of useful causes to which he devoted tireless energy is extraordinary. Leaving aside pre-Civil War politics, he labored at prison reform and at undermining the power of the New York State Canal Ring before that conflict; during it and for a time after he served his nation with great effectiveness as consul and minister in France, playing a major part in forestalling Confederate efforts to obtain men-of-war in that country. He wrote extensively once he was back home, doing much to help establish American historical writing in a properly scientific attitude. He helped mightily in bringing the Panama Canal to a successful conclusion. And more than to any one man, the world owes to him the New York Public Library in its present magnificent form. In religion, he was an active Swedenborgian, though he was no stickler for rigid agreement with every detail of the Swedish mystic's theology. And he was not over-fond of Catholics, despite his long and intense interest in French Catholics of the seventeenth century. Incidentally, Miss Gregg supplies a most amusing correspondence prior to the election of the Archbishop of New York to the Board of Trustees of the Astor, Tilden and Lenox Foundation (New York Public Library).

These two books deserve to be read together, if only to show that two men can make much the same mistakes politically with very different moral outcomes. Greeley essentially was a failure; Bigelow, by any reasonable standard, a brilliant success. Where the difference lies is a great intangible. The only name I know for it is quality.

More Books of the Week

Anthony Trollope. Elizabeth Bowen. Oxford. $1.00. *Santa Claus. E. E. Cummings. Holt.* $1.50.

CERTAINLY one does not review serious writers from a book-making vantage, or indeed attempt to compress their works under one stingy heading. However, aside from their direct opposition in content, there is some justice in mentioning Miss Bowen's and Mr. Cummings's small plays at once. The volumes are severally lovely—in binding, printing, design. And shape and size. Miss Bowen's infinitesimal radio script, done up with Father Knox's map of Barsetshire, together with a wood engraving of the "abundant" Anthony, a facsimile page of one of his manuscripts, and an early illustration of hateful Mrs. Proudie correcting the Bishop, is a half-pocket book; exactly as neat, quiet and sensible as its play. I imagine the play to have been schemed for some wartime series of the BBC and while the scandal of

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the "Autobiography" and its author's "professionalism" is undoubtedly a large portion of the theme, I think Miss Bowen does rather better in matching Trollope's own lifelong desire for "ordinariness" to that of the recent young soldier, who is the protagonist of the piece. The argument of professional as opposed to "fine" writing has held cumulative weight since the days of Scott, one supposes, but I cannot help feeling that its modern statement is the burning business of poets, and I think Miss Bowen herself would contend as much. For a novelist, under her own definition, there is not necessarily any argument at all. For a novelist it is even possible to be both fine *and* professional at once, and it is extremely interesting to read the championship of one of these heroic monsters by another, currently practicing, one. A bibliography of Trollope's fiction is appended to the script and will unquestionably double the value of this truly nice job to all beginning, as well as unfaltering, partisans.

The Cummings work is physically larger. Subtitled "A Morality," its formal and plain obscurities will be, for enthusiasts perhaps, supported by its theme—that, "Knowledge has taken love out of the world. . . ." Santa Claus, the personification of *Understanding* is met by Death and persuaded that "We are not living in an age of gifts: this is an age of salesmanship, my friend"; and that the easiest thing to sell is knowledge, i.e., science. An exchange of masks is made, and in the ensuing campaign, Santa is nearly killed; Death is hung; *A Child* tells the truth; and *A Woman* is requited. I wish I could sort out the allegory, but I cannot. In respect of its theme, I suppose you could say that if you *know* what a "Morality" is, you are incapable of *understanding* it; a premise which seems to me to be suspect. On the other hand, there are flashes contained in the piece which do deserve at least the author's exploration: "Why say 'fantastic' when you mean 'scientific?'" is one of Death's lines. And earlier, this same character hazards that since people do not (*will not,* I make it.) exist, it is no wonder that he, Death himself, is a skeleton. These satirical seeds could tower into inherent Cummings lyrics, I think; but dealt out, as they are here, in allover pentameters, with no clarity of character *or* attribute, they advance, one must admit, nothing. I am afraid it is his publishers who are to be commended for Mr. Cumming's present performance.

KAPPO PHELAN.

The Balkans. William B. King and Frank O'Brien. Knopf. $3.50.

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL, that past-master of the vivid phrase, never uttered a phrase more vivid than "behind the iron curtain." Nor one more mischievous. Deliberately or not, it divided our One-World-In-Becoming into an Anglo-American and a Soviet world. Whether consciously or not, a great part of the political thought of the past two years has been conditioned by it.

So it is with this book. Refreshingly, and in this day unexpectedly, Mr. King and Mr. O'Brien are open-minded enough to note that a curtain has two sides, and that from the Russian side the "iron curtain" appears as an Anglo-American curtain shutting Russia off from access to the warm waters of the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, it has caused them to approach the Balkans as, in the words of their subtitle, a "frontier of two worlds." The approach might have seemed more satisfactory had their many incidental generalizations, some contemporary, some historical, given greater evidence of political judgment. Three examples will illustrate.

It is, for example, doubtful whether for the first time "Marshal Tito's program in Yugoslavia has made it possible to speak of the country as a whole." To quote Mr. King and Mr. O'Brien themselves, "one must look to deeds and not to documents for an understanding of Yugoslavia." It has yet to be proved that Tito's federal constitution has indeed united the divergent Yugoslav peoples—divergent in religion, language and degree of civilization—any more than did the original Triune Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

It is, next, just not true that in her later history Russia "was used mostly as a great stupid pawn in European power politics." "Pawns" do not win such vast semi-continents as Siberia nor rich oil-bearing territories like those of the Southern Caucasus. Nor could a "pawn" have taken part with great European powers in the partitions of Poland.

It is, vastly, to give a misleading picture of the balance of force in the Middle East to speak of Iran in 1941 as being "ripe for revolt against Britain." Iran is, and then was, an independent country. It is as accurate to speak of her "revolting" against Britain as it would be to speak of Mexico "revolting" against the United States.

Such generalizations aside, Mr. King and Mr. O'Brien have brought together a mass of detailed information about the recent and not-so-recent history, the peoples and the personalities, the cultures and the politics of the Balkan countries.

Rather more than half of their book is devoted to Yugoslavia, Rumania and Bulgaria. In this half there are excellent sketches of such well-known men as Tito, Dimitrov and Vaniu, as well as of the less well-known Rumanian communists. There is also a good over-all picture of an area under Soviet influence. On the evidence which Mr. King and Mr. O'Brien bring, that influence is due less to the appeal of the Soviet communist creed—though that appeal should never be discounted in any relatively poor region of the world—than to Soviet opportunism on the one hand and to Anglo-American ineptitude on the other. The Soviet Government knows exactly what it wants and is prepared to employ any means to hand to obtain it, even to keeping a king on his throne or to using former members of the notoriously fascist Rumanian Iron Guard. The Anglo-Americans (and perhaps the Americans more than the English) stand pat on the perch of non-intervention. Then, when that perch slips from under them, they plunge somewhat hysterically into a blatantly anti-Soviet program of military-economic aid for Greece and Turkey, which, in the apt words of one recent commentator, is "too little, too late, too loud." In the rush, a peasant country like Bulgaria, which would go its non-communist, non-capitalist peasant way, is left stranded. A semi-industrial country like Rumania, which could have provided the industrial nucleus of an integrated Balkan economy, is left in economic servitude to the Soviet Union.

Mr. King and Mr. O'Brien's chapter on the economic Soviet capture of Rumania is, incidentally, the best in their book. Their description of the "ruble area" shows that the Soviet Government is doing in southeastern Europe exactly what it is doing in northeastern Europe, which is exactly what the Tsarist Government tried to do before

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it. That is to tie the small marginal countries to Russia with such strong economic bonds that political control is all but unnecessary.

To Greece, Mr. King and Mr. O'Brien devote less than one-tenth of their book, and that tenth not very enlightening. They give a good factual account of the Greek civil war, which, again refreshingly and unexpectedly, does justice to the unfortunate British soldiery who were sent to Greece to shoot down the Greek Left. They do not delve very deeply into the underlying significance of Greece in world power politics. It is a pity because Greece, as the debates in the United Nations Security Council have shown, is the pivotal point of present Balkan troubles. It is a pity, too, because Greece is the other side of the "iron curtain"; and a Soviet critic might reasonably object that there is at least as much underground influence to be investigated in Greece as there is in, say, Yugoslavia.

On Turkey (which since the days of Kemal Ataturk is strictly no more a Balkan country than is Hungary) they are much better. That is to say that they give an excellently objective account of the slippery Turkish war and post-war diplomacy, some description of Turkish personalities, and some detailed consideration to such specific problems as control of the Dardenelles and the province of Kars.

The final effect of their chapters on Turkey, however, is, like the final effect of their chapters on Yugoslavia and Rumania, Bulgaria and Greece, to inspire the question: "Where do we go from here?" And on the evidence they bring, presented in the way they present it, the only logical answer to that question is: "To war, declared or undeclared, of nerves or bombs."

But is the evidence complete? In at least one minor particular in might be suggested that it is not. There was a time, between the two World Wars, when that typically Balkan form of political expression, the International Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, threatened to cause a war between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria every spring. Since the end of the second World War virtually nothing has been heard of IMRO. On the contrary, it seems possible that Bulgaria and Yugoslavia may come together in that Federation of South Slavs of which many Slavs have long dreamed.

And might not the evidence lead to another conclusion than war? It is undeniable that there is an Anglo-American-Soviet frontier in the Balkans. It is equally undeniable that there are Anglo-American-Soviet frontiers on the Amur in Manchuria, on the 38th parallel of latitude in Korea, on the Araxes in northern Iran, at the North Cape, and at other points too numerous to mention. It is even undeniable that there is a frontier between two widely different ways of life on the Rio Grande.

Frontiers can be the starting points of wars, even if, in strict truth, they do not "cause" them. Balkan frontiers have been the starting points of wars. But frontiers can also be bridges; and Balkan frontiers are in some ways especially adapted for this function. There is something of almost everything in the Balkans. In peoples, there are Latins and Slavs; in religion, there are Moslems and Christians; in economy, there are the peasant and the industrial. Left to themselves, these different peoples and religious and economies have got on well enough together in the past, occasional shootings notwithstanding. In the future they could provide a bridge between the Moslem East and the Christian West, even conceivably between a "Soviet way of life" and an "American way of life," if left to themselves.

Therein, of course, lies the rub. The Balkan countries have not been left to themselves. Often they could not have been left to themselves without being left to die of starvation. But at least for the future, any intervention in their affairs should come only from the higher authority of the United Nations, and not from any single nation, however well-intentioned. That way, and that way only, there will at least be a possibility that the Balkans may form a bridge, not a frontier, for the future.

W. H. HINDLE.

The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More. Edited by Elizabeth Frances Rogers. Princeton. $7.50.

THIS BOOK is a model of imaginative, inspired scholarship. Saint Thomas More's letters have mostly been printed at some time, but "they are scattered and in books which are now very rare. Some, never before printed, such as the whole correspondence with the University of Oxford, are here given for the first time, as well as all the extant, known letters, (except the group of about forty readily accessible in the *"Erasmi Epistolae"*) and they are given in sequence, with the fullest and most informative notes it is possible to imagine. Dr. Rogers published her first work on More twenty-two years ago, a "Calendar of the Correspondence." It was suggested to her by the late Dr. P. S. Allen, the editor of Erasmus's letters, whose widow contributes a foreword to this Princeton University volume. Dr. Rogers's whole life, and this splendidly successfully culminated enterprise, are, it would seem, a model of what inter-university, and international relationships might and should be, if conducted on the right levels. Something of Saint Thomas More's own mellow wit, and of his gentle urbanity, must have infused the entire project. Text, printing, illustrations, indexing, all are beyond praise; and of course the letters themselves are a delight, whether those written in an easy Latin, or those others in a harder English. A solider figure than the exquisite Sir Phillip Sidney, More may well come to be generally accepted at Chesterton's valuation, as the "greatest Englishman of all." Princeton has done Oxford and England a great service by the publication of this timely and admirable volume, and of Dr. Rogers herself it can only be said that *"bene meruit de patria sua, et de patria Angliae."*

ANNE FREMANTLE.

Dark December. Robert Merriam. Davis. $3.00.

THE BATTLE of the Bulge has already received an enormous amount of attention, both from professional military men and from that authoritative and articulate group of critics, the American public. Of all the stories of great battles to come out of the war, the report of this battle is perhaps the most fascinating. It was the greatest defeat inflicted upon American arms during the war, preceded by titanic victories and followed by further astounding triumphs. But most important, the story is full of the fascination which is most intense—that of morbidity, of disaster, of indescribable confusion and outrageous error, of calamity and failure at the very moment of dizzy success.

There was an appalling optimism among the American forces (at least on all high headquarters levels) just before the Germans struck. Intelligence officers vied with

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one another in their estimates of the catastrophe facing the Germans and in their jubilant prose summaries of the hopelessness of the German situation. No one was more optimistic than 12th Army Group Headquarters itself, which, through its G-2, estimated simply that the Germans had a thinner and more brittle defensive front than even our own front line troops realized. Merriam takes intelligence staff operations for a ride, and well he might. One or two men, notably the First Army G-2, Colonel "Monk" Dickson, had previously indicated a concentration for a possible counterattack, but such prognostication was made only once, and never given the emphasis it apparently deserved. (Merriam adds further that the divining power of Colonel Dickson was ofttimes demonstrated to be something less than effective.) For, strangely enough, this very counterattack, far from being a desperate German lunge built up in record time, was planned months in advance by a cagey and frantic Füehrer, who started thinking about it in the hospital after the bomb attempt on his life; who drained his other fronts and supplies, who committed his reserves, who demanded and got the impossible from his armies—all the while we were still driving furiously toward the German frontier and the consolidation of a continent-long front. It was to be *the* gigantic German effort in the West, and was to split the Allied armies, and plunge to the north, seizing supplies, encircling whole corps and armies, and capturing the crucial cities of Brussels and Antwerp. The minimum gains were to be dislocation, demoralization, and even temporary disintegration of our forces. The attack finally achieved all these in varying degree.

Merriam is at his best anlayzing the actual confusion that was rampant from the very beginning of the German drive on December 16th. I know his handling is expert here, for I was in the midst of the chaos, and can vividly recall, for example, the blank stares I met at various headquarters when I would ask what road net was clear, and to what point. It was really no one's fault, after the first day or two. *People simply did not know what was happening.* And it was days and days before there was any concerted agreement among the different levels as to just what was going on. I was dispatched once on a security mission to Marche, and was assured that the whole area was clear well toward the east. I discovered, as I roared into the town in the evening, that it was under heavy shelling from the approaching Germans. After a nightmare blackout trip through suspicious guards, who held us at Tommygun point time after time until I had produced countless passwords and local Americana, I was stopped from completing a second mission by a road block which told me that there was no use going through another few kilometers to Beauraing—it was occupied. I saw repeated evidence of the confusion that Merriam describes so well, and sometimes one could sense the beginnings of a panic which fattened on the thousands of rumors of actual or mythical German achievements and plans.

But our forces achieved the miracle. The attack was stopped, and resolved, and the Eisenhower decisions during this phase of the war in Europe rank in importance and genius with the great military decisions of history. (In an interesting note, by the way, Merriam tells of a letter that Ike wrote, months before the attack, pointing out to Monty that such a German operation was possible —"we might get a nasty little Kasserine. . . ." Ike him-

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self, later, did not recall his accurate crystal-gazing.) The effort failed because of stunning courage, e.g. St. Vith (most important) and Bastogne; bitter heroism, superior generalship, overwhelming logistical achievement, and German exhaustion.

Merriam writes a very factual narrative, complete, heavily detailed, and amply validated. He was an officer of the historical section of the Army, and later compiled for the War Department the detailed history of the Ardennes counterattack. "Dark December" is excellent reading for military men, or for those who are ex-military, and compelling reading for those of the European fraternity, who were fighting and milling around in the Bulge during all these events. It will prove absorbing, at least in sections, to the general reading public. It is not only a complete operation report on the Bulge, but also a substantial record of the entire European campaign, from pre-invasion days. And Merriam analyzes a good deal of the strategy, without ever setting himself up as a Field Marshal Ingersoll. I like especially his restraint in judging the turn of events, and the way he simplifies so many confused things: the criticism of the split in command between Montgomery and Bradley; the spread of confusion by the wildfire myths and rumors, which actually made the German infiltration-spy-paratroop-sabotage plan successful beyond their highest hope; the reasons for the swift collapse of the American front; and a multitude of other cloudy issues. He has augmented and substantiated much of his evaluation by personal talks with both Allied and German commanders in this wild fight. The total effect is one of clarity, honesty, and justice in telling the story of the Ardennes.

Even those who will feel that they are being roasted will admit that this record is one of complete objectivity. There is none of the irate and bitter hostility which characterized "Top Secret." There is really a far better understanding of the myriad details and problems that marked this weird interlude. And incidentally, I know the Ardennes campaign, through experience and study. I know intelligence operations. I also know intelligence officers. I was one of them. T. E. CASSIDY.

Three Selected Short Novels. Booth Tarkington. Doubleday. $3.00.

THE PUBLICATION in book form of the three selections comprising this new volume, a year after the death of the author, will not add to Tarkington's literary stature. The fact that they first appeared in popular magazines is not an insuperable handicap, but certain overtones seem almost inevitable. In the first two of the novels, for instance, the respective heroines are of incomparable, dazzling beauty. One of them exploits her charms to further family literary ambitions, while the other is content simply to be as devastating as possible to every man she meets. There are flashes of the skill which produced "Alice Adams" in all three of these novelettes. They are strong on individual psychology and convincing most of the time; they show what makes marriages of the selfish unhappy. The children who suffer do have their genuinely poignant moments. But that is as far as it goes. Those currently engaged in building up Booth Tarkington as a major American social satirist must do an awful lot of fast talking and explain away a myriad of lesser efforts such as those included here. E. S.

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The Inner Forum

American Friends of Trieste

THE SETTING UP of the Free Territory of Trieste by the peace treaties has led to the effort to form there a model democratic state where Christian sociology may actually be fully applied. Father Mario Shirza of that city of 350,000 people, mostly Italians, situated at the head of the Adriatic, is in this country (at the Church of the Transfiguration, 29 Mott Street, New York 13, N. Y.) to organize American help for this constructive program. He views that seaport as the eastern gate to Italy, the meeting point of East and West, the commercial link between Central Europe and the outside world, a focus for political penetration. He believes that Christian social principles can be fully put into practice there; that for the first time in history a state primarily motivated by such principles can actually function.

An Institute of Social Studies has been set up; the development of Christian trade unions is also in process despite a lack of adequate meeting places and other facilities. A professional school of arts and trades is intended to develop an élite among the workers, "equipped with a sound social, moral and religious culture." A workers' university is planned on the French model for intensive social and religious instruction for the most gifted of the workers. Cultural and recreational centers and suitable information services are also contemplated. One of the principal means of providing for the needs of the workers will be all sorts of consumers' cooperatives. Thus far there are already operating, with restricted facilities, some 30 cultural centers of Christian workers in various sectors of the city of Trieste.

In his appeal for funds to carry out these activities in an area where the Communists are liberally supplied with funds and facilities, Father Shirza says: "Under present world conditions the outbreak of a third world war is by no means improbable. Such a war would be not only horrible but entirely useless, since ideas, or ideologies—correct or mistaken—are not destroyed by cannon. An atomic war, by infinitely increasing the hunger and despair of suffering humanity would intensify rather than lessen the want of a better organization of our society, and result in barbarous civil war and even greater hardship for all concerned. Social problems must be settled on a different basis. The one (and the only) solution to the conflict dividing the peoples of the world today—the conflict between individualistic Capitalism and State Capitalism (communism)—is offered by the Christian social doctrine, founded, not on a *cruel human* concept of justice, but on the Christian concept of justice and love. . . ."

CONTRIBUTORS

George STREATOR is on the editorial staff of the New York *Times*.

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